

Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

Friday
October 21, 2022

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Military suicides drop as leaders push new programs



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Flags and tributes mark the Memorial Day holiday at Fort Logan National Cemetery in southeast Denver, May 31, 2021.

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Suicides across the active duty U.S. military decreased over the past 18 months, driven by sharp drops in the Air Force and Marine Corps last year and a similar decline among Army soldiers

during the first six months of this year, according to a new Pentagon report and preliminary data for 2022.

The numbers show a dramatic reversal of what has been a fairly steady increase in recent years.

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Associated Press

Government honors Tali for his cultural musical contribution



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Minister of Tourism received visit of General Consul of the United States



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Military suicides drop as leaders push new programs



An 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper participates in artillery training during a field exercise on Fort Bragg on Aug. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The shift follows increased attention by senior military leaders and an array of new programs aimed at addressing what has been a persistent problem in all the services, although it's unclear what impact any of the programs had or if pandemic-related restrictions played any role in the decline.

The Defense Department is still grappling with widespread shortages of mental health personnel and a difficult push to reduce the stigma of seeking help. But the numbers provide a glimmer of hope that some of the recent changes — which range from required counseling visits to stress relief education and recreational outings — may be working.

According to the data, the number of suicides in the Air Force and Marine Corp dropped by more than 30% in 2021 compared with 2020, and the Navy saw a 10% decline. The Army saw a similar 30% decrease during the first six months of this year, compared with the same time period last year.

The Army decline comes in the wake of a spate of suicides at Army bases last year, including in Alaska, which fueled a small increase in deaths compared with 2020. The Army was the only military service to have more suicides in 2021 than in 2020 — 176 compared with 174. But it is also the only service that has seen a decline this year.

The Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps have all had a bit more suicides in the first six months of 2022 than during the same time period last year, according to preliminary Pentagon data. That makes it unclear if the downward trend will continue through the end of this year.

According to Defense Department data, there were 328 suicides by active duty service members in 2021, compared with 384 in 2020. In the first six months of 2021, there were 173 suicides, compared with 158 in that time frame this year. That drop is entirely due to the Army, which had 101 in the first half of 2021, and 69 in that time period this year. The National Guard and

the Reserves both saw a small dip in suicides, from 121 in 2020 to 119 in 2021. And there were also fewer Guard deaths in the first half of 2022, compared with last year. Suicides in the Reserves went up, from 29 to 36.

The Guard has worked over the last year to reduce suicides through outreach and other changes, including policies to destigmatize getting mental health help and a program that provides firearms locks for service members who keep weapons at home, said Army Maj. Gen. Eric Little, head of manpower and personnel for the Guard. Little said that in some cases, if service members report they are seeking counseling, it can affect their security clearance or flying eligibility. He said officials are working to change policies.

Suicide has long been a problem in the U.S. military, and its causes are complex and not fully understood. Behavioral research has linked military suicides to a range of personal issues, including finances and marital stress.

The Pentagon report released Thursday said that "intimate relationship problems in the last year was the most common interpersonal stressor identified" in both suicide and suicide-attempts. And Little said relationship stress continues to be one of the leading risk factors for the Guard, as well as work stress, substance abuse and sexual abuse.

Defense leaders have noted that the complexity of the causes makes it difficult to address, since there is no one-size-fits-all cure.

Yvette Bourcicot, the acting assistant Army secretary for manpower, told the AP on Thursday that while staffing shortfalls continue, the service is "being creative" in using other personnel such as chaplains and health and fitness coaches to fill the gaps.

"The amount of attention that we're paying to it, I think, is hopefully — we're cautiously optimistic — what is translating into the downward trend," said Bourcicot. She also noted that base commanders tailor programs to fit their forces. □

For example, Lt. Gen. Douglas Sims, in his previous post as commander at Fort Riley, Kansas, began requiring soldiers at the base to meet with a counselor once a year.

"I can't order anybody to talk to a counselor," he said earlier this year, just before he left. "But I can tell you, listen, you've got to sit in a room for 30 to 60 minutes. And there happens to be a counselor in the same room."

All but about 10 out of 14,000 soldiers, he said, used the time to talk with the counselor.

The trends of those who die by suicide, however, have been consistent.

Pentagon officials said that they are working on hiring 2,000 more mental health care personnel and hope to have the first 400 on board in the coming months.

According to the Pentagon report, overwhelmingly they are white male, enlisted service members under the age of 30. In 2021, roughly 94% of military suicides were men. And they most often used a gun — usually a personally owned one, not a military firearm. The second most common method was hanging or asphyxiation.

The report said the suicide rate — which is the number of deaths per 100,000 service members — has gradually gone up since 2011, and is similar to that of the U.S. population, when adjusted for age and gender. The data for military spouses and dependents for calendar year 2020 was also released. Suicides by spouses were divided almost equally by gender and nearly 80% were under the age of 40. Again, most — 60% — used a firearm. Military dependents who die by suicide were most often male and under the age of 18.

Suicide attempts, meanwhile, most often involved poisoning, which includes drugs and alcohol. The report said more than 1,200 people attempted suicide, and 67 tried two or more times. □

Pentagon to provide funds, help for troops seeking abortions

By TARA COPP

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon will provide travel funds and support for troops and their dependents who seek abortions but are based in states where they are now illegal, according to a new department policy released Thursday. The military will also increase privacy protections for those seeking care.

The order issued by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin outlines the rights and protections service members and their dependents will have regardless of where they are based, which was a key concern of troops after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June.

Access to abortion has become a central issue in the midterm elections. President Joe Biden promised this week that the first bill he sends to Capitol Hill next year will be one that writes abortion protections into law, if Democrats control enough seats in Congress to pass it.

The high court ruling in the Dobbs v. Jackson case stripped away women's constitutional protections for abortion and left it to states to determine whether the procedure is legal



Pentagon spokesman U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder speaks during a media briefing at the Pentagon, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

within their borders. In the months since, abortion has been banned or sharply restricted in more than a dozen states.

The new military policy sets guidelines so that local commanders aren't allowed to influence whether service members get access to care or face a culture where they or their dependents do not come forward out of fear of repercussions. It builds on an initial reaction by the Pen-

tagon in June, when, days after the Supreme Court decision, the Pentagon said it would continue to allow medical leave for service members who needed to travel out of state to get abortions but noted it needed to review the court ruling and subsequent state laws to see if further guidance would be necessary. Austin directed the services to implement the new policy by the end of this calendar year.

The Pentagon has also been concerned that the Dobbs decision could affect recruitment and retention as service members or potential recruits weighed the risk that they would be assigned to states where abortions are illegal. Many of the Pentagon's major military bases are located in states including Texas and Florida where anti-abortion laws are now in place.

The new guidelines also di-

rect each military base to publicly display what reproductive health care support is available for service members and their dependents, extend the time in which a service member must report a pregnancy to commanders to 20 weeks and provide additional protections for defense health care providers who furnish abortion services.

Under federal law, the Pentagon's health care system can provide abortions only in cases of rape or incest or when a mother's life is in danger. That doesn't change under the new policy. The funds the military would provide service members would cover transportation only; they would not pay for abortion services that are not covered by federal law.

Attorney Natalie Khawam, who represented the family of slain U.S. soldier Vanessa Guillén, whose body was found last year outside the boundary of Fort Hood, Texas, said the policy is part of a continued effort by the Pentagon to address a military culture that has not been supportive of female service members. Guillén's death led to sweeping changes as to how sexual harassment and assault are addressed in the military. □

Panel votes to add COVID shots to recommended vaccinations

By MIKE STOBBE

AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — COVID-19 shots should be added to the lists of recommended vaccinations for kids and adults, a panel of U.S. vaccine experts said Thursday.

The panel's unanimous decision has no immediate effect. COVID-19 shots already are recommended for virtually all Americans. Rather, it would put the shots on the annually updated, formal lists of what vaccinations doctors should be routinely offering to their patients, alongside shots for polio, measles and hepatitis.

The expert panel's deci-

sions are almost always adopted by the CDC director and then sent to doctors as part of the government's advice on how

to prevent disease. State and local officials often look to the lists in making decisions about vaccination requirements for



A nurse prepares a syringe of a COVID-19 vaccine at an inoculation station in Jackson, Miss., Tuesday, July 19, 2022.

Associated Press

school attendance, but local officials don't always adopt every recommendation.

Flu and HPV shots, for example, aren't required by many schools.

Usually, vaccines placed on the schedules are fully licensed, but that has not yet happened for every COVID-19 vaccine product in every age group. COVID-19 shots initially were approved under emergency authorization measures starting in late 2020. Over time, the government has licensed many of the shots, but full approval has not yet happened for booster doses or for shots for kids younger

than 12.

Because the shots have already been recommended under emergency authorization for Americans older than 6 months, however, the decision makes no real difference, federal officials say.

Earlier this week, the same expert panel voted unanimously to add COVID-19 shots to a program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated.

This is in preparation for the day in the future when the federal government transitions out of paying for all COVID-19 shots, as it has been doing. □

Shuffle of juvenile prisoners lands 8 at adult penitentiary

By KEVIN MCGILL

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A controversial transfer of juvenile prisoners to a temporary facility at Louisiana's sprawling high security prison farm for adult convicts involves a shuffle of youths to and from four different lockups around the state, officials said Thursday.

As of Wednesday night, the facility at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola held eight young offenders in a building isolated from the adult population. That building is now being called the Feliciana Center for Youth. The penitentiary is in a remote rural area in West Feliciana Parish, north of Baton Rouge.

The move of young offenders was announced in July by Gov. John Bel Edwards. It came as state officials were under growing pressure to do something after the latest in a series of escapes from the violence-plagued Bridge City Center for Youth in suburban New Orleans. That escape involved six inmates who overpowered a guard and jumped a fence. One inmate is suspected in a car-



Vehicles enter at the main security gate at the Louisiana State Penitentiary the Angola Prison, the largest high-security prison in the country in Angola, La., Aug. 5, 2008.

Associated Press

jacking and shooting that happened before all were recaptured.

However, the state said in a news release that the eight at the Feliciana facility are not from Bridge City, as initially announced by a state senator. Four were from Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville in southwest Louisiana and four were from Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe in northeast Louisiana.

Ten youth offenders from Bridge City, initially thought to have been taken to the Feliciana facility at Angola, were actually transferred to Monroe, Nicolette Gordon, a spokeswoman for the state Office of Juvenile Justice confirmed Thursday. State Sen. Patrick Connick, whose district includes Bridge City, acknowledged he had been mistaken when he said the Bridge City youths had been

taken to Angola, in accordance with plans announced in July. Connick said in a Thursday interview he was told by officials that behavior at the Bridge City Center has improved since the pending transfers to Angola and stepped up security at Bridge City were announced in July. Connick said juvenile justice officials transferred prisoners this week based on assessment of the behavior

of individuals at each of the state juvenile lockups. The ones moved to Angola, he said, "were the worst of the worst."

Gordon said this week's moves were the first of a three-phase transfer. She said the youths were evaluated in accordance with a state law passed earlier this year that ordered juvenile justice authorities to establish a tiered system for classifying youths as low-, medium- or high-risk based on age, aggressive tendencies and other factors.

Juvenile justice advocates and families of the young inmates have objected to the transfer of youths to Angola.

The penitentiary is home to serious offenders, some sentenced to death. It is where executions of condemned prisoners are carried out.

It has its own checkered history of sometimes bloody violence and has been the subject of litigation alleging inadequate medical care. A lawsuit filed by opponents of the transfer contended the trauma of being housed at Angola would be irreversible. □

Worker who quietly lowered town's fluoride for years resigns

By LISA RATHKE

Associated Press

A town employee who quietly lowered the fluoride in a Vermont community's drinking water for years has resigned and is asserting that the levels had actually been low for much longer than believed.

Richmond water superin-

tendent Kendall Chamberlin disclosed in his five-page resignation letter, submitted Monday, that fluoride levels have not been in the state-recommended range for over a decade instead of nearly four years, as the state had recently disclosed.

Chamberlin said in his letter

in language that at times echoes unfounded reports that have circulated online in recent years that he doesn't think the current fluoridation policy is legally required or scientifically sound, and, in his opinion, poses "unacceptable risks to public health."

"I cannot in good conscience be a party to this," he wrote.

Chamberlin wrote that he has never received a negative job review, has each day accurately measured the fluoride levels in the water, and has provided monthly written reports that were approved and signed by the town manager and submitted to two state agencies.

He contends that fluoridation is voluntary and that the amounts are not mandated. While fluorinating municipal water is volun-

tary, towns that do must maintain levels within the state's recommendations and submit monthly reports to the state Health Department, according to state officials.

The Vermont Health Department did not immediately return an email seeking comment on Chamberlin's resignation or his new assertions about the length of time fluoride levels have been out of range.

Months after the discovery that the fluoride added to the water was half the amount recommended by state and federal agencies, the town of Richmond said two weeks ago it would raise levels to be within range.

The original news that the fluoride had been reduced for nearly four years a much shorter time than Chamberlin revealed in his

resignation letter shocked some residents and area doctors, who raised concerns about misinformation, dental health and government transparency, and said it was not a decision for Chamberlin to make alone.

The addition of fluoride to public drinking water systems has been routine in communities across the United States since the 1940s and 1950s. Many U.S. municipalities and other countries don't fluoridate water for a variety of reasons, including opposition, feasibility and the ability to get fluoride other ways.

Critics assert that the health effects of fluoride aren't fully known and that adding it to municipal water can amount to an unwanted medication; some communities in recent years have ended the practice. □



A pick-up truck rolls through downtown, Wednesday Oct. 5, 2022, in Richmond, Vt.

Associated Press

Truss quits, but UK's political and economic turmoil persist

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Liz Truss quit Thursday after a tumultuous and historically brief term marred by economic policies that roiled financial markets and a rebellion in her political party that obliterated her authority.

Truss became the third Conservative prime minister to be toppled in as many years, extending the instability that has shaken Britain since it broke off from the European Union and leaving its leadership in limbo as the country faces a cost-of-living crisis and looming recession.

"I cannot deliver the mandate on which I was elected by the Conservative Party," Truss acknowledged in a statement delivered outside her 10 Downing Street office.

Financial markets breathed a sigh of relief, but Truss leaves a divided ruling party seeking a leader who can unify its warring factions. Truss, who said she will remain in office until a replacement is chosen, has been prime minister for just 45 days and will almost certainly go down as the shortest-serving leader in British history. George Canning died in office in 1827 after 119 days.

The Conservative Party said it would choose a successor by the end of next week. Potential contenders include: former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak, who lost to Truss in the last leadership contest; House of Commons leader Penny Mordaunt; Defense Secretary Ben Wallace; and Boris Johnson, the former prime minister ousted in July over a series of ethics scandals. The low-tax, low-regulation economic policies that got Truss elected by her party proved disastrous in the real world at a time of soaring inflation and weak growth.

Her Sept. 23 economic plan included a raft of tax cuts paid for by government borrowing that investors worried Britain couldn't afford. It pummeled the value of the pound and drove up the cost of mortgages,



Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss addresses the media in Downing Street in London, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022.

causing economic pain for people and businesses already struggling from an economy yet to emerge from the pain of the pandemic.

That financial tumult led to the replacement of Truss' Treasury chief, multiple policy U-turns and a breakdown of discipline in the governing Conservative Party. Truss resigned just a day after vowing to stay in power, saying she was "a fighter and not a quitter." But she couldn't hold on any longer after a senior minister quit her government amid a barrage of criticism and a vote in the House of Commons Wednesday descended into chaos and acrimony. "It's time for the prime minister to go," Conservative lawmaker Miriam Cates said, echoing the sentiments of many others.

The pound rose about 1% Thursday to around \$1.13 after Truss' resignation.

Where the Conservative Party goes from here is not clear. Its myriad factions from hard-right Brexiteers to centrist "One Nation" Tories are at each other's throats. "Nobody has a route plan. It's all sort of hand-to-hand fighting on a day-to-day basis," Conservative lawmaker Simon Hoare told the BBC on Thursday before

Truss resigned.

Newspapers that usually support the Conservatives were vitriolic. An editorial in the Daily Mail on Thursday was headlined: "The wheels have come off the Tory clown car."

Truss' departure on Thursday sparked jubilation for the tabloid Daily Star, which had set up a livestream last week featuring a photo of the prime minister beside a head of lettuce to see which would last longer. "This lettuce outlasted Liz Truss!" it proclaimed Thursday.

While many Britons joined the world in laughing at the lettuce joke, Bronwyn Mad-dox, director of international affairs think-tank Chatham House, said "there is no question that the U.K.'s standing in the world has been severely battered by this episode and by the revolving door of prime ministers."

She said Truss' successor would need to have policies "based on economic stability, but need also to include a resolution of the relationship with Europe; much of the upheaval represents the bitter aftermath of Brexit."

The Conservative party said nominations for a new leader will close on Monday. Candidates need the

cused the Conservatives of presiding over "utter chaos."

"This is doing huge damage to our economy and the reputation of our country," he said. "We must have a chance at a fresh start. We need a general election – now."

Truss' political unraveling began after she and her Treasury chief, Kwasi Kwarteng, unveiled an economic plan with 45 billion pounds (\$50 billion) in unfunded tax cuts.

That hammered the value of the pound and increased the cost of U.K. government borrowing. The Bank of England was forced to intervene to prevent the crisis from spreading to the wider economy and putting pension funds at risk.

Truss then fired Kwarteng, and his replacement, Jeremy Hunt, scrapped almost all of Truss' tax cuts, cut short her energy subsidies and abandoned her promise of no public spending cuts.

He said the government will need to save billions of pounds and there are "many difficult decisions" to be made before he sets out a medium-term fiscal plan on Oct. 31.

Speaking to lawmakers on Wednesday for the first time since the U-turn, Truss apologized and admitted she had made mistakes, but insisted she would not resign a resolve that was short-lived. Within hours a senior Cabinet minister, Home Secretary Suella Braverman, quit, blasting Truss in her resignation letter, saying she had "concerns about the direction of this government."

For many Conservative lawmakers, the final straw was a Wednesday evening vote over fracking for shale gas that produced chaotic scenes in Parliament, with party whips accused of using heavy-handed tactics to gain votes.

Chris Bryant, a lawmaker from the opposition Labour Party, said he "saw members being physically manhandled ... and being bullied." Conservative officials denied this. □

Germany, EU push to curb migration via Balkan route

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany on Thursday hosted a meeting with representatives of the European Union and several European countries including from the western Balkans in an effort to curb migration via the so-called Balkan route.

"We want to protect the people who flee to us from war and political persecution," German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said.

"At the same time, we also take decisive action against irregular migration ... our declared goal is to reduce the rising irregular migration via the western Balkans route."

In recent months, an increasing number of migrants have been trying to reach wealthier western European countries via the Balkans, often paying smugglers thousands of euros (dollars) to take them across borders without valid travel documents.

The package of measures that western European and EU officials pushed for at the Berlin meeting include aligning the visa policies of western Balkan states Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Mont-



Firefighters extinguish the fire in a hotel where refugees from Ukraine were accommodated in Gross Stroemkendorf, Germany, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022. A fire has almost completely destroyed a shelter for refugees from Ukraine in the municipality of Groß Strömekendorf in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on Thursday night.

enegro and North Macedonia all of which want to join the 27-nation bloc with EU standards, combating trafficking of migrants, ensuring effective border protection and speeding up deportations.

Especially Serbia has been pressured by EU countries to restrict its lax entry policies and no longer allow visa-free travel for citizens

from India, Tunisia, Morocco and elsewhere. These people often use Serbia as a loophole to enter the continent and continue from there to the west.

While Germany has welcomed more than 1 million Ukrainian refugees mostly women and children who entered legally since Russia attacked the eastern European country on Feb. 24, the government has recently struck a much more hostile tone regarding migrants from more distant parts of the world.

By the end of September, Germany's federal police had registered almost 58,000 unauthorized entries at the country's borders mostly in the east, where the Balkan route ends. According to preliminary

Associated Press

figures, there were 12,720 cases in September alone, more than twice as many as a year earlier, dpa reported.

Austria, the Czech Republic and other central European countries have also reported increased entries of migrants and asylum seekers.

Almost 135,000 people had applied for asylum in Germany in 2022 by the end of September. That is around a third more than in the same period last year, according to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. However, it's still a far call from 2015-16, when more than 1 million migrants, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan applied for asylum in Germany.

The figures for asylum applications in 2022 are much lower than the total number of refugees because Ukrainians can enter Germany without a visa and do not need to apply for asylum.

Migration expert Gerald Knaus expressed doubt whether officials' attempts to prevent migration to the EU via the Balkans would curb the current influx. □

New Zealand farmers hit streets to protest cow-burp tax plan

By NICK PERRY

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand

(AP) — Farmers across New Zealand took to the streets on their tractors Thursday to protest government plans to tax cow burps and other greenhouse gas emissions, although the rallies were smaller than many had expected.

Lobby group Groundswell New Zealand helped organize more than 50 protests in towns and cities across the country, the biggest involving a few dozen vehicles.

Last week, the government proposed a new farm levy as part of a plan to tackle climate change. The government said it would be a world first, and that farmers

should be able to recoup the cost by charging more for climate-friendly products.

Because farming is so big in New Zealand there are

10 million beef and dairy cattle and 26 million sheep, compared to just 5 million people about half of all greenhouse gas emissions come from farms. Methane

from burping cattle makes a particularly big contribution.

But some farmers argue the proposed tax would actually increase global greenhouse gas emissions by shifting farming to countries less efficient at making food.

At the protest in Wellington, farmer Dave McCurdy said he was disappointed in the small turnout, but said most farmers were working hard on their farms during a spell of good spring weather at a particularly busy time of year.

He said farmers were good environmental stewards.

"It's our life, our family's lives," he said. "We're not out there to wreck it, we wouldn't make any money."



New Zealand farmers protest in central Auckland on government plans to make them pay for greenhouse gas emissions, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022.

Associated Press

We love our farms. That's what annoys us. We're painted at these bad guys, but a lot of farmers have spent generations looking after that land."

He said the proposed tax didn't take proper account of all the trees and brush he and other farmers had planted, which helped trap carbon and offset emissions. He said if the proposed tax and herd reductions went ahead, it would be ruinous to many farmers. "I'm out," he said. "Waste of time."

Farming remains vital to New Zealand's economy. Dairy products, including those used to make infant formula in China, are the nation's largest export earner. □

Minister of Tourism received visit of General Consul of the United States

ORANJESTAD – Yesterday morning, minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber held a meeting with American General Consul, Mrs. Margaret Bond. During this meeting they discussed various topics of interest which will reinforce the bonds between Aruba and the United States.

One of the topics discussed was the pre-clearance at the airport, seeing that currently the government of Aruba is negotiating a new agreement with the American government. The pre-clearance is something extremely necessary and something that greatly helps Aruba in the development of our tourism in the American market, according to a press release. Minister Oduber expressed



his intention to maintain the pre-clearance as it is, seeing the benefits this has for our tourism. All of this will be done with help from the

General Consul.

Another topic discussed during the meeting was the close contact that Aruba

has with the United States, including contact with all American aviation companies. Oduber also brought forward the topic of Seam-

less Travel, which is a project that will help with the flow of passengers for Aruba and will also improve the experience of American passengers. Consequently, the project of Queen Beatrix International Airport known as Gateway 2030 was also discussed. This project will greatly help with the flow of passengers and will also expand the capacity of Aruba's airport.

Minister Oduber concluded by mentioning that "this was a very fruitful meeting during which Mrs. Bond expressed how happy she is with the cooperation between Aruba and the United States". The General Consul also offered the Government of Aruba help for any strategy or vision it may have for the future. □

Central Bureau of Statistics carrying out "Child & Youth Survey 2022"

ORANJESTAD – Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) recently began carrying out the "Child & Youth Survey 2022" with the purpose of getting better insights of various topics of importance for children and youth in Aruba, minister of Economic Affairs, Communication and Sustainable Development, Geoffrey Wever, in charge of collection and production of statistics, explained.

The Survey will give clarity on themes like activities in which the youth take part in their free time, participation in school, participation in the labor market, view on their future, relationship

with their parents, use of smartphones, social media and gaming, and possible problems related to this, smoking and use of vaping, use of alcohol and drugs, and mental health.

It is the opinion of minister Wever that the survey will help the academic world and students in their investigations. It will also provide valuable information to inform the community in general, children and adolescents.

The statistics resulting from this survey will be sent to ministers, among others, minister of Justice and Social Affairs, Mr. Rocco Tjon;



minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber and minister of Education and Sport, Mr. Endy Croes to use in their policies relating to children and adolescents in Aruba. The information resulting from this survey will also contrib-

ute to the work being done to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) regarding children and youth.

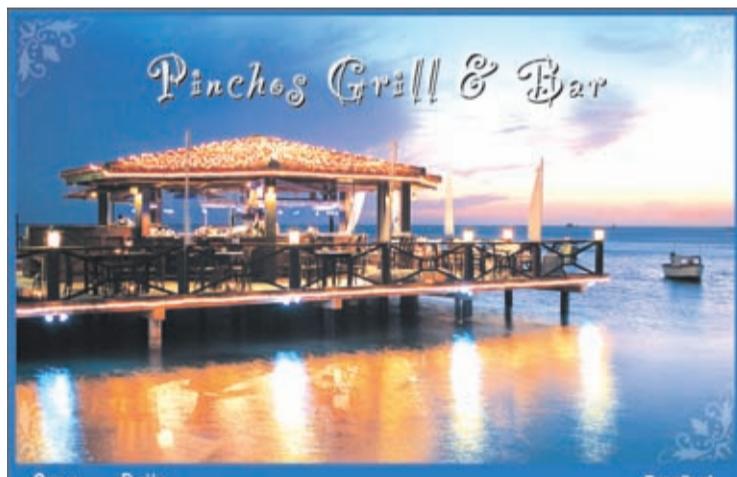
Information on the situation of children and youth in Aruba is relevant to de-

velop and monitor policy. "When the National System of Statistic (NSS) is implemented, relevant statistics like this will also be part of the statistics produced by NSS", minister Wever said. □

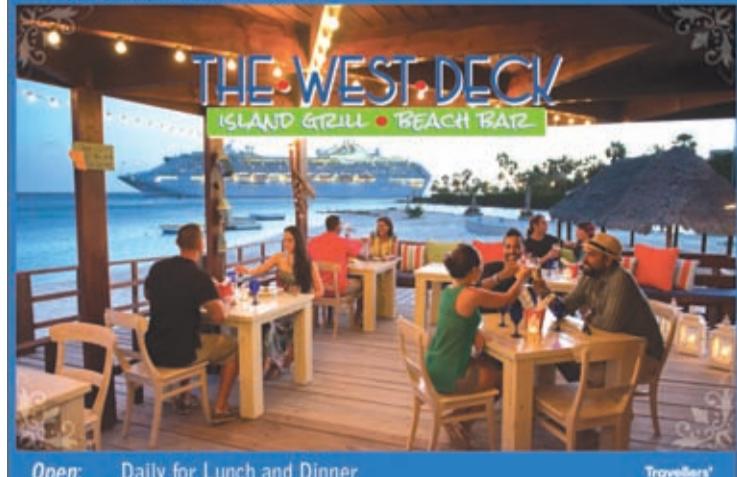


Wind Creek Aruba celebrate with its team members the 4th quarter of Wind Creek Moments

Hundreds of extraordinary acts happen every day at Renaissance Wind Creek Aruba Resort making it one of the many reasons why guests love to visit the resort.



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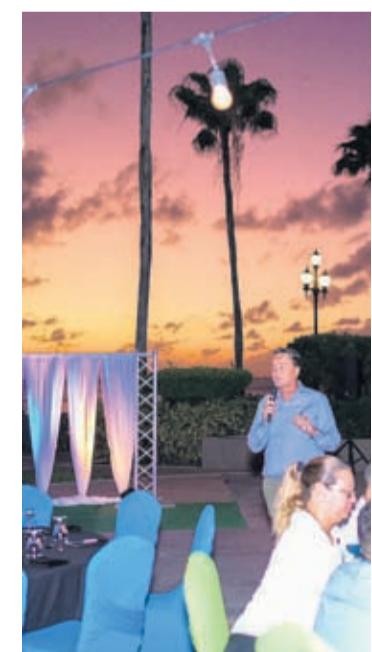


ORANJESTAD – October 19, 2022 - Wind Creek Moments is a program that recognizes Wind Creek Aruba team members when they truly live their unique purpose. Wind Creek Aruba feels that to encourage the level of service expected, they must recognize those team members that consistently share the human caring and individuality that is the heart of the Wind Creek Hospitality Purpose.

A Wind Creek Moment

Guests can share through several ways when a team member deliver a Wind Creek Moment, this is when a team member demonstrate genuine engagement, interactions with positive energy, sense of belonging and importance of the brand of hospitality or provide an escape from the ordinary during their stay.

The rewards in Wind Creek Moment are



on an accrual basis. They must meet the minimum requirement for each tier level to earn their reward, in addition to these great rewards, team members can also earn entries into special drawings & promotions.

The 4th quarter celebration of Wind Creek Moment organized by the quality service manager Gabriela Garcia, was held this week at the Renaissance Festival Plaza. Team members were recognized for their positive impact with our guests, celebrating their moments with a great evening full of surprises, prizes, recognition, and happy faces. Paul Gielen, General Manager of Renaissance Wind Creek Aruba Resort handed out the certificates and thanked each team member for their genuine support to bring the purpose of the Wind Creek Hospitality to life. □

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Aruba to me

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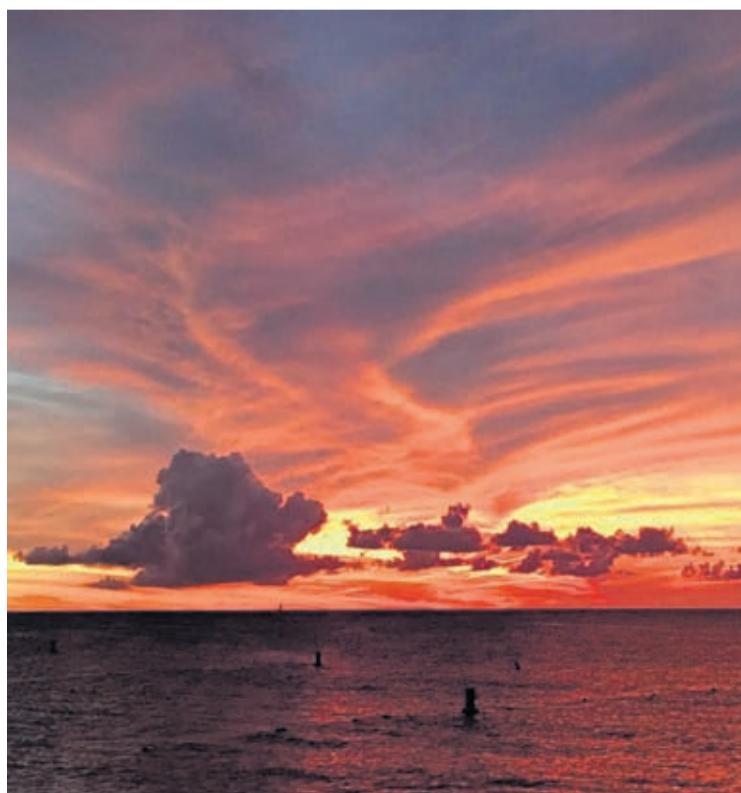
Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from **Elaine and Michael Glaberman** who wrote to us saying:

"Aruba to us: A place that truly is the epitome of beauty and serenity."

We heartily thank you for sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers.□



Aruba to me

For today we received a lovely message from **Gina Schneider** who wrote to us saying:

"Aruba to me is home because of the familiarity of the island and the many places we frequent. Smiling faces always welcome us back."

Thank you very much for sharing what Aruba means to you, with us and our readers.□



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Honoring of loyal visitors at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were Jay and Deb-



Jay and Debbie Jones resident of Massachusetts, United States.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The couple loves coming to the island for its friendly people, especially at Bucuti, fantastic restaurants, wonderful beach and weather, great beer and the safe-

ty Aruba has.

During the ceremony Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A), and members of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors, and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. Aruba can now be considered by the Honorees, their Home Away from Home! □

Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were Fred & Linda Dietzel, resi-

dents of Pennsylvania, United States. This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The couple loves coming to the island for the fact that they got engaged on Aruba, the people they have met, the beautiful beaches, the casual atmosphere and the sunsets.

During the ceremony Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A), and members of the Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors, and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years.

Aruba can now be considered by the Honorees, their Home Away from Home! □



Government honors Tali for his cultural musical contribution

ORANJESTAD – Recently, Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes in the name of the government of Aruba was present at the occasion of the honoring of Nero Tali Wever. Tali is a legendary musician who is part of Aruba's musical cultural heritage and who, through his talent and career, was an ambassador for Aruba around the world.

Prime Minister Wever-Croes represented Minister of Finance and Culture, Xiomara Maduro who is currently abroad attending the Annual Meetings of IMF. The honoring took place at the Cas di Cultura in the presence of family, acquaintances, friends and loved ones of Tali.

From a young age, Tali discovered his musical talent. He began singing with 12 years old, and when he became a little older he began with his first guitar. It was notable that Tali didn't receive any lessons to learn how to play. He would listen to popular guitarists and learned that way.

His musical trajectory began together with his group of friends, serenading the neighborhoods, singing at family birthdays, at homes of acquaintances and during the popular parties at the end of the year. Afterwards, Tali began per-



forming at hotels and here his international musical trajectory began.

Through his good interpretations and his varied repertoire as well as his great interpretation of songs

in various languages, he garnered interest among promoting agents who loved his show. Thus he was invited to go perform abroad and Tali got many contracts outside of Aruba and lived in many different countries, among others Puerto Rico, the United States, Canada, France, Colombia, Venezuela and Curaçao. Obviously in all

these countries Tali would promote our country and our language Papiamento during his international performances.

Tali is known among his family and friends as a person with a quiet character, responsible and dependable. Tali takes good care of his voice and at 83 years old, Tali is still working at

what he loves the most: playing guitar, creating an ambiance, bringing joy in other people's hearts at hotels and restaurants in Aruba.

In the name of the Government of Aruba, Prime Minister Wever-Croes thanked the 'Semper Tali' Commission ('Always Tali'), which consists of his friends coming together and with great love organizing this beautiful honoring. In the name of the government of Aruba, she thanked Nero 'Tali' Wever for his important contribution on the field of music and culture. "Thank you for all the pleasant moments which delighted our people with the beautiful music. Thank you for the years that you were an ambassador for Aruba through your music and your performances abroad. You are our singer, you are our artist, our entertainer, a musical legend. Aruba is very proud of your talent, that you dedicated your entire life to music and that you are renowned locally and internationally", she said.

"Tali, I want you to know that Aruba appreciates you. That God can continue pouring blessings on Tali and for one and all to continue enjoying your amazing interpretations. As the Minister of Culture, Xiomara Maduro says, 'Culture is something you have to live'. Tali is part of our cultural musical heritage", she finalized saying. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Glowing

1 Com- poser Jop- lin 41 Picture puzzle

6 Spiked clubs 43 Japanese genre

11 Origami need 44 News item

12 Dazzle 45 Toys with tails

13 Peace goddess 46 Bakery buys

14 Stood up

15 Swindle

16 Memory loss

18 Bulldog backer

19 June honoree

20 Sort

21 Dis- patched

23 Minimal change

25 Talker's gift

27 Cloth scrap

28 Patron saint of young girls

30 Use incisors

33 Ga. neighbor

34 Collar

36 Thurman of film

37 Search (through)

39 Me, to Michel

**Yesterday's answer**

8 Finale 28 Reunion

9 Without group breaking a sweat

10 Chop- house order

11 Early move

12 Wallet bill

13 King of music

14 Cook's collection

15 Bulldog backer

16 June honoree

17 Memory loss

18 Bulldog backer

19 June honoree

20 Sort

21 Dis- patched

23 Minimal change

25 Talker's gift

27 Cloth scrap

28 Patron saint of young girls

30 Use incisors

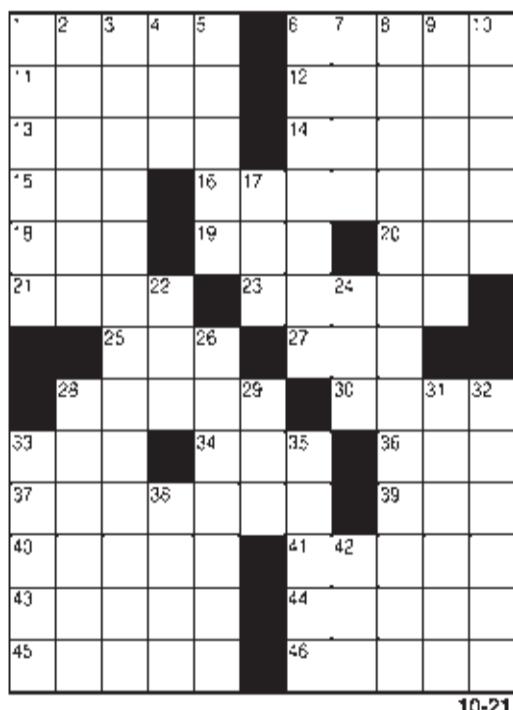
33 Ga. neighbor

34 Collar

36 Thurman of film

37 Search (through)

39 Me, to Michel



10-21

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-21**CRYPTOQUOTE**

X B O B D W Z P X P M H S W Q

P F V Z W U C K M W M G M V R A M X I

Z P X I A S C M V . — X A E M V O

H X D B P

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO BE NORMAL, YOU WILL NEVER KNOW HOW AMAZING YOU CAN BE. — MAYA ANGELOU

'Bad situation': Soaring U.S. dollar spreads pain worldwide

By PAUL WISEMAN, KELVIN CHAN, SAMY MAGDY and AYSE WIETING

Associated Press

The cost of living in Cairo has soared so much that security guard Mustafa Gamal had to send his wife and year-old daughter to live with his parents in a village 70 miles south of the Egyptian capital to save money.

Gamal, 28, stayed behind, working two jobs, sharing an apartment with other young people and eliminating meat from his diet. "The prices of everything have been doubled," he said. "There was no alternative."

Around the world, people are sharing Gamal's pain and frustration. An auto parts dealer in Nairobi, a seller of baby clothes in Istanbul and a wine importer in Manchester, England, have the same complaint: A surging U.S. dollar makes their local currencies weaker, contributing to skyrocketing prices for everyday goods and services. This is compounding financial distress at a time when families are already facing food and energy crunches tied to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"A strong dollar makes a bad situation worse in the rest of the world," says Eswar Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University. Many economists worry that the sharp rise of the dollar is increasing the likelihood of a global recession sometime next year.

The dollar is up 18% this year and last month hit a 20-year high, according to the benchmark ICE U.S. Dollar Index, which mea-



Workers gather as they wait for customers outside a secondhand car parts shop in the industrial area of the capital Nairobi, Kenya, Friday, Oct. 7, 2022.

Associated Press

sures the dollar against a basket of key currencies.

The reasons for the dollar's rise are no mystery. To combat soaring U.S. inflation, the Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark short-term interest rate five times this year and is signaling more hikes are likely. That has led to higher rates on a wide range of U.S. government and corporate bonds, luring investors and driving up the U.S. currency. Most other currencies are much weaker by comparison, especially in poor countries. The Indian rupee has dropped nearly 10% this year against the dollar, the Egyptian pound 20%, the Turkish lira an astounding 28%.

Celal Kaleli, 60, sells infant clothing and diaper bags in Istanbul. Because he needs more lira to buy imported zippers and liners priced in dollars, he has to raise prices for the Turkish customers who struggle to pay him in the much-diminished local currency.

"We're waiting for the new year," he said. "We'll look into our finances, and we'll downsize accordingly.

There's nothing else we can do."

Rich countries aren't immune. In Europe, which was already teetering toward recession amid soaring energy prices, one euro is worth less than a \$1 for the first time in 20 years, and the British pound has plunged 18% from a year ago. The pound recently flirted with dollar parity after Britain's new prime minister, Liz Truss, announced huge tax cuts that roiled financial markets and led to the ouster of her Treasury secretary.

Ordinarily, countries could get some benefit from falling currencies because it makes their products cheaper and more competitive overseas. But at the moment, any gain from higher exports is muted because economic growth is sputtering almost everywhere.

A rising dollar is causing pain overseas in a number of ways: It makes other countries' imports more expensive, adding to existing inflationary pressures.

It squeezes companies, consumers and governments that borrowed in dollars. That's because more local currency is needed to convert into dollars when making loan payments.

It forces central banks in other countries to raise interest rates to try and prop up their currencies and keep money from fleeing their borders. □

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First Native American woman in space awed by Mother Earth

By MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — The first Native American woman in space said Wednesday she is overwhelmed by the beauty and delicacy of Mother Earth, and is channelling "positive energy" as her five-month mission gets underway.

NASA astronaut Nicole Mann said from the International Space Station that she's received lots of prayers and blessings from her family and tribal community. She is a member of the Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes in Northern California.

Mann showed off the dream catcher she took up with her, a childhood gift from her mother that she's always held dear. The small traditional webbed hoop with feathers is used to offer protection, and she said it's given her strength during challenging times. Years before joining NASA in 2013, she flew combat in Iraq for the Marines.

"It's the strength to know that I have the support of my family and community back home and that when things are difficult or things are getting hard or I'm getting burned-out or frustrated, that strength is something that I will draw on to continue toward a successful mission," Mann told The Associated Press, which gathered questions from members and tribal news outlets across the country. Mann said she's always heeded her mother's advice on the importance of positive energy, especially on launch day. "It's difficult for some people maybe to understand because it's not really tangible," she said. "But that positive energy is so important, and you can control that energy, and it helps to control your attitude."

Mann, 45, a Marine colonel and test pilot who was born in Petaluma, California, said it's important to recognize there are all types of people aboard the space station. It's cur-



In this image from video made available by NASA, astronaut Nicole Mann shows her dreamcatcher during an interview on Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022.

rently home to three Americans, three Russians and one Japanese astronaut.

"What that does is it just highlights our diversity and how incredible it is when we come together as a human species, the wonderful things that we can do and that we can accomplish," she said. While fascinated with stars and space as a child, Mann said she did not understand who became astronauts or even what they did. "Unfortunately, in my mind at that time, it was not in the realm of possibilities," she said. That changed later in her career. Now, she's tak-

ing in the sweeping vistas of Earth from 260 miles (420 kilometers) up and hoping to see the constellations, as she encourages youngsters to follow their dreams.

As for describing Earth from space, "the emotions are absolutely overwhelming," she said.

"It is an incredible scene of color, of clouds and land, and it's difficult not to stay in the cupola (lookout) all day and just see our planet Earth and how beautiful she is, and how delicate and fragile she is against the blackest of black that I've ever seen — space — in the background."

Associated Press

Mann rocketed into orbit with SpaceX on Oct. 5. □

TODAY **BONDIA**

How to reach us!

The map shows the layout of downtown Aruba with several streets labeled: Weststraat, Scheepstraat, Schenkelstraat, Clayia G.F. Bellico Cross, Clayia G.J., Royal Plaza Mall, L.G. Smith Boulevard, Waterfront, and High Rise Hotel. A magnifying glass is focused on the area where the TODAY and BONDIA logos are located on a building. Labels include "Downtown" and "Bus terminal".



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Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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Sullivan's warning: Journalists should be on high alert

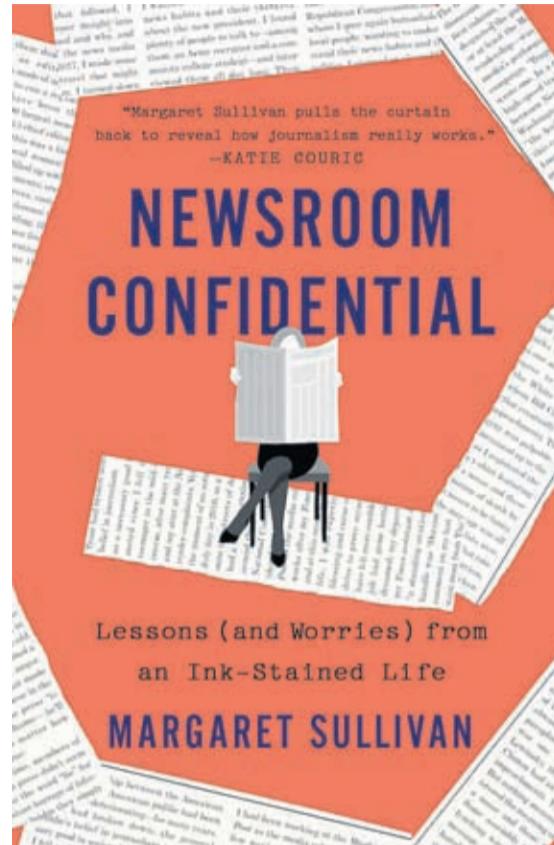
By DAVID BAUDER

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Margaret Sullivan cringed one day when a former colleague at The Washington Post, critic Carlos Lozada, tweeted with exasperation about books pitched to him as combinations of memoir and manifesto.

That's exactly what she was writing. Sullivan's "Newsroom Confidential" traces her career from The Buffalo News to The New York Times and The Washington Post, but its meat lies in the challenge she puts to fellow journalists in the Trump era. Too many times she saw journalists slow to recognize threats posed to democracy during his presidency and now, with Donald Trump poised for a potential comeback and followers his taking cues, Sullivan said she worries that reporters are unprepared.

"There still seems to be a tendency to not want to offend," she said, "to not want to offend the Republican establishment, to not offend the Trump Republicans, but rather to normalize them with democracy on the brink. I don't think that's the right approach." Several news organizations now have special beats to cover threats to the electoral process. Sullivan acknowledges that work, and praises Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, radio station WITF, which reminds listeners on a regular basis about local legislators who rejected the



This combination of photos shows the cover image for "Newsroom Confidential: Lessons (and Worries) from an Ink-Stained Life" by Margaret Sullivan, left, and a portrait of Sullivan.

Associated Press

results of the 2020 election. The issue hasn't gone away, as illustrated this past weekend when CNN's Dana Bash sparred with Kari Lake, Arizona's Republican candidate for governor. Bash repeatedly asked about false fraud reports and pressed Lake about whether she would accept her own election results. Lake complained Bash was concentrating on old news. "I don't think it's about being aggressive," Sullivan said. "I think it's about framing things differently so we don't see these very high stakes politics as a game, we don't see it as

horserace, we don't see it as entertaining. We see it as extremely consequential and happening before our eyes." Press criticism is not new; for instance, the media's performance before the Iraq War was widely condemned, said Will Bunch, columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. But not many who raise concerns have Sullivan's stature, he said. "This criticism isn't coming from the outside," Bunch said. "It's coming from someone who is in many ways the ultimate insider. People at the highest levels are going to have to

engage with someone like Margaret." But, Bunch conceded, "listening to her and doing something in response are two different things."

The concern is whether hostility toward the press has reached a point of no return. Too many Americans are tuned out or more interested in their own beliefs than truth, Sullivan said. "Both of those things are very, very troubling," she said. "Do I think we're too far gone? I don't want to think that."

Born and raised in nearby Lackawanna, New York, Sullivan was a summer in-

tern in 1980 at what was then called the Buffalo Evening News. She rose through the newsroom to become its top editor in 1999. She describes sexism she encountered along the way, like when an older male editor took credit for her idea. They were good years, grounding years, for newspaper work.

"Journalism offered a viable career path," she wrote. "Not a great way to get rich, perhaps, but certainly a way to earn a living wage. As a bonus, it struck me as exceedingly cool."

She wasn't intimidated when she spotted an opening for The New York Times' public editor job in 2012, pursuing it hard. Local newspapers were contracting, and she didn't have the stomach for steering The Buffalo News in a diminished state.

The public editor is a thankless job. You're situated in a newsroom, charged with publicly evaluating the work of those around you. Nobody likes to be criticized, whether it's someone at the highest levels of journalism or the person serving you coffee.

Sullivan became known for her blunt writing about the Times during her years there, tackling such issues as the overuse of confidential sources, its coverage of Hillary Clinton's emails and national security issues, even poking fun at so-called fashion trends touted by the Styles section. □



Barbara Kingsolver's 'Demon Copperhead' is new Oprah pick

By HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbara Kingsolver's "Demon Copperhead," a modern retelling of Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield," is Oprah Winfrey's new book club choice.

In a statement Tuesday, the release date for "Demon Copperhead," Winfrey called Kingsolver's 560-page novel "the kind

of epic you want to read this fall." The book is set in the mountains of southern Appalachia and follows the life of a boy, born to a single, teenage mother, as he endures everything from foster care to drug addiction.

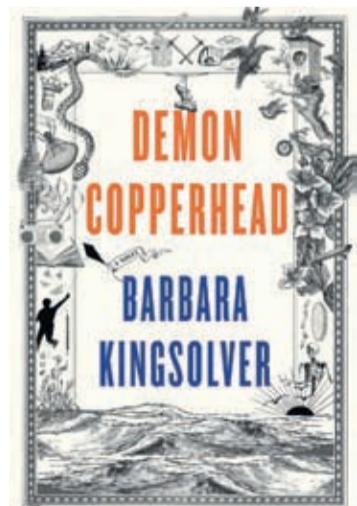
Kingsolver, 67, has lived for years on a farm in southern Appalachia, and has long blended narrative drama and social commentary.

Her past novels include "The Bean Trees," "Flight Behavior" and "The Poisonwood Bible," a Winfrey selection in 2000. Her honors include a National Humanities Medal and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

"Getting that call from Oprah is the highest literary prize on the planet, if you ask me," Kingsolver said in a statement. "Not just because of the powerful way

she connects books and readers, but because of the reader she is, herself. I could barely hold it together when she described my own book to me on the phone her appreciation of the craft, the empathy, and how it touched her personally."

Winfrey will host an interactive gathering with Kingsolver and Oprah Daily Insiders on Nov. 17. □



This cover image released by Harper shows "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver.

Associated Press

Shiffrin gaining on Vonn, Stenmark as World Cup season opens

By HOWARD FENDRICH
AP National Writer

Mikaela Shiffrin heads into the World Cup season that begins Saturday in Austria with 74 career wins on the circuit, putting her within shouting distance of Lindsey Vonn's 82, the most for a woman, and Ingemar Stenmark's overall mark of 86.

As Shiffrin's total increases she never claimed fewer than three victories in any of her 10 previous seasons, with a high of 17 in 2018-19 each triumph is sure to be met with attention to, and questions about, those records. When the 27-year-old from Colorado was asked Thursday about where she would place that sort of achievement on a resume that already includes four overall World Cup titles, two Olympic gold medals and a half-dozen world championships, Shiffrin contemplated two points of view, even veering into an unprompted appraisal of what will determine when she's ready to retire.

If, Shiffrin said on a video conference with reporters, she owns the World Cup wins record by the time she walks away from ski racing: "I would probably



Mikaela Shiffrin celebrates on the podium with the trophy for the alpine ski women's overall World Cup title, in Meribel, France, Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Associated Press

rank it pretty high. I mean, it would be an enormous accomplishment in my career, and maybe one of the most meaningful accomplishments, because it would have meant that I was consistently at the top and successful throughout my entire career, throughout multiple kind of generations of athletes, despite injuries, despite some very traumatic experiences." It would represent achieving sustained success and

longevity, which she places among her biggest goals as an athlete.

And then, shifting the focus of her response, Shiffrin said she would not consider surpassing Vonn and Stenmark the be-all-and-end-all of her competitive time on the slopes.

"I do not feel like I have to achieve that record in order to feel comfortable retiring. I feel like retirement is fully based off of just how I feel when I'm skiing and if I

feel like I have the energy the physical and mental energy to keep pushing and to really continue to push the sport, which is the basis of what I want to try to do, is to always push the sport," said Shiffrin, who didn't earn a medal in any of her five individual events at the Beijing Olympics in February, unable to complete the courses for three. "I feel like I've been able to do that for most of my career, or all of my career,

and if it gets to the point where I'm not able to continue to push, then it's kind of pointless to keep doing it, at least at this capacity," Shiffrin continued. "So that would be my gauge for when can I retire or be done with skiing, done with ski racing, and feel kind of comfortable with what I've accomplished. To be honest, it could be tomorrow, and I'm already comfortable with what I've accomplished."

Stenmark, a Swede, participated in 16 World Cup seasons in the 1970s and 1980s. Vonn, an American, raced for 19 seasons before retiring in 2019. "When I think about goals in the sport, when I was younger, it was a little bit vague. It was like 'Oh, I want to be the best in the world.' And then you're like, 'Oh, OK, well, I want to keep being the best in the world,' I guess. So that's sort of it, I guess. It's like: 'How long can I continue to be a contender for the top spot on the podium in my career in as many races as I can?'" And it is a little bit vague, but it leaves a lot of room to be ambitious, almost to a fault," Shiffrin said. "But that keeps me motivated. ... Just keep going. Just keep swimming." □

Brady apologizes for comparing playing football to military

By FRED GOODALL
AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Tom Brady apologized Thursday for making a comparison between football and military deployment while interviewing NBA star Kevin Durant on the seven-time Super Bowl champion's weekly podcast.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback said he used a "very poor choice of words" on the SiriusXM podcast "Let's Go! With Tom Brady, Larry Fitzgerald and Jim Gray" while he and Durant were discussing the difficulty of balancing a commitment to being highly successful athletes with life outside of sports.

"Earlier this week I made a statement about playing football and the military. It

was a very poor choice of words," Brady said. "I just want to express that to any sentiments out there that people may have taken in a certain way, so I apologize."

Durant was a guest on the podcast Monday.

"I almost look at a football season like you're going away on deployment in the military, and it's like, 'Man, here I go again.' There's only one way to do it. ... The reality is you can really only be authentic to yourself, right?" Brady said on the podcast.

"Whenever you may say, 'Oh man, I want to, you know, make sure I spend a little more time doing this.'

When it comes down to it, your competitiveness takes over and as much as you

want to have this playful balance with the work balance, you're going to end up doing exactly what you've always done, which is why you are who you are," Brady added. "You're going to go, how do I get it done?"

The quarterback was asked Thursday to explain the point he was trying to make during the podcast. "To be honest, I really don't want to expand on it too much. ... I have a tremendous amount of gratitude for everyone who served (in the military)," Brady said. "In the end, we play a game and the military is defending our country," Brady added.

"It's two very different things, and I shouldn't have made the comparison." □



Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady (12) throws a pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

Concussion lawsuit against NCAA could be first to reach jury



A Southern California helmet sits in the end zone prior to an NCAA college football game against UCLA, Saturday, Nov. 22, 2014, in Pasadena, Calif.

By BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A lawsuit alleging the NCAA failed to protect a former University of Southern California football player from repeated concussions is nearing trial in a Los Angeles court, with a jury seated Thursday in what could become a landmark case.

The suit filed by Matthew Gee's widow says the former USC linebacker died in 2018 from permanent brain damage caused by countless blows to the head he took while playing for the 1990 Rose Bowl winning team, whose roster also included future NFL star Junior Seau.

Of the hundreds of wrongful death and personal injury lawsuits brought by college football players against the NCAA in the past decade, Gee's is only the second to head toward trial and could be the first to reach a jury.

The issue of concussions in sports, and football in particular, has been front and center in recent years as research has discovered more about long-term effects of repeated head trauma in problems ranging from headaches to de-

pression and, sometimes, early onset Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease.

"For years (the NCAA) has kept players like Matthew Gee and the public in the dark about an epidemic that was slowly killing college athletes," Alana Gee's lawsuit said. "Long after they played their last game, they are left with a series of neurological conditions that could slowly strangle their brains."

The NCAA, the governing body of college athletics, said it wasn't responsible for Gee's tragic death, which it blamed on heavy drinking, drugs and other ailments.

"Mr. Gee used alcohol and drugs to cope with a traumatic childhood, to fill in the loss of identity he felt after his football playing days ended, and to numb the chronic and increasing pain caused by numerous health issues," NCAA lawyers wrote in a court filing.

A 2018 trial in Texas led to a swift settlement after several days of testimony by witnesses for the plaintiff, the widow of Greg Ploetz, who played defense for Texas in the late 1960s.

In 2016, the NCAA agreed to settle a class-action concussion lawsuit, paying \$70

million to monitor the medical conditions of former college athletes, another \$5 million toward medical research and payments up to \$5,000 toward individual players claiming injuries.

The NFL has been hit with similar suits and eventually agreed to a settlement covering 20,000 retired players providing up to \$4 million for a death involving chronic traumatic encephalopathy, also known as CTE, a degenerative brain disease found in athletes and military veterans who suffered repetitive brain injuries.

Lawyers said they expected NFL payouts to top \$1.4 billion over 65 years for six qualifying conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Gee, 49, was one of five linebackers on the 1989 Trojans squad who died before turning 50. As with Seau, who killed himself in 2012, Gee's brain was examined posthumously and found to have CTE.

The defense has sought to exclude any testimony about Gee's teammates, and the NCAA said there was no medical evidence Gee suffered from concus-

sions at USC.

Two ex-teammates, however, testified at depositions about blows they routinely took in an era when they were told to hit with their heads.

Mike Salmon, who played defense at USC and went on to the NFL's San Francisco 49ers and Buffalo Bills, said he distinctly recalled Gee and other linebackers being "out of it" during hard-hitting practices.

"Matt hit like a truck," Salmon said. "I saw him quite a bit coming back to the huddle. You could tell ... he wasn't all there."

"It was our job to make helmet-to-helmet contact in the '80s," Gene Fruge, a former nose-tackle testified. "There was no question about it. That was your job, to explode the man in front of you."

The NCAA, which required schools in 2010 to have a concussion protocol, said it gave them "state-of-the-art" information about head injury risks known at the time Gee played. It said long-term effects of head injuries weren't well understood then.

Gee's lawsuit said the debilitating effects of concussions and other traumatic

brain impacts have been known for about a century, first from studies of "punch drunk" boxers and later from findings in football and other contact sports.

"The NCAA knew of the harmful effects ... on athletes for decades, they ignored these facts and failed to institute any meaningful methods of warning and/or protecting the athletes," the lawsuit said. "For the NCAA, the continued expansion and operation of college football was simply too profitable to put at risk." After graduating in 1992, Gee was cut by the Los Angeles Raiders in training camp. He married Alana, his college sweetheart, and they had three children as he ran his own insurance company in Southern California. For 20 years, he lived a "relatively normal" life, the suit said.

But that began to change around 2013 when he began to lose control of his emotions, the lawsuit said. He became angry, confused and depressed. He drank heavily. He told a doctor days would go by without him being able to recall what happened.

When he died on New Year's Eve 2018, the preliminary cause of death was listed as the combined toxic effects of alcohol and cocaine with other significant conditions of cardiovascular disease, cirrhosis and obesity.

Joseph Low, a Los Angeles lawyer for clients with traumatic brain injury who is not involved in the case, said drug and alcohol abuse can become a symptom of brain injuries as those suffering try to self-medicate, particularly as they deteriorate.

Blaming Gee's death on substance abuse will not shield the NCAA from evidence showing he had CTE, which is not caused by drugs and alcohol, Low said.

"The whole discussion about drugs and alcohol isn't going to get it done for them. That's a distraction," Low said. "It's really a disgusting way to do character assassination. It's what you call defense strategy 101." □

Associated Press